

Health Mission to Cuenca, Ecuador, South America

September 2001

In accordance with the by-laws, the Pan American medical Society of the Washington Metropolitan Area has redefined itself as a volunteer service organization providing medical assistance to Latin America. As part of this effort, the Board of Directors has authorized a medical mission to Cuenca, Ecuador in September of 2001.

Previously, Ecuador has hosted many medical groups performing primarily plastic surgical repairs in children. These missions have been short and visually rewarding cases that generate much public support. Speaking with Ecuadorian local physicians and dentists we have come to realize that quite a few adults and children with non-cosmetic deformities e.g. club foot, large hernias, uterine prolapse, burn scar contractures, and other, also need assistance. In addition, general dental care is lacking and simple procedures such as tooth extractions are in great demand.

The health mission must be formed with volunteer physicians and dentists working in the United States to assist the foundation operated by doctors at Hospital Monte Sinai and at the Hospital Militar de Cuenca, in the provision of medical and dental care to indigent patients in the surrounding areas.

The local physicians have specifically requested ortho and ENT specialties and the society has suggested adding general surgery. We anticipate a total group size of 15, including 5 physicians from the United States to work in 2-4 operating rooms, likely to operate between 30 and 60 cases in 4-5 days depending on case mix and/or availability. Most working days run from 7:30 a.m. to about 5-6 p.m. Time permitting, we may also give some lectures or assist local physicians with difficult cases.

Local conditions in Cuenca will be fairly basic but not primitive. Most equipment and supplies will be brought with us to Cuenca. At the conclusion of the trip we may have a short excursion available at a reasonable additional cost for trip members. Under this current proposal, volunteer physicians will pay their entire cost of the trip, estimated at \$1,500 p.p. tax deductible, (budget includes travel, lodging and food). Non-members volunteer doctors attending this mission will be invited to become members of the society.

Taking into consideration that this is a very important activity to the society, we are hereby exhorting the membership to participate in this mission by donating your time and effort for the betterment of health conditions in Latin America.

Juvenal R. Goicochea, M.D. - President

Victor M. Priego, M.D. - Secretary